

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 7/29/2016

GAIN Report Number:

Colombia

Post: Bogota

SaborUSA Increases the Popularity of U.S. Food in Colombia

Report Categories:

Market Promotion/Competition

Export Accomplishments - Marketing, Trade Events and Shows

Approved By:

Michael Conlon, Agricultural Counselor

Prepared By:

Michael Conlon, Agricultural Counselor
Ana Salinas, Marketing Specialist

Report Highlights:

SaborUSA is a non-traditional marketing campaign in Colombia that promotes U.S. food and beverages and American culture. FAS/Bogota, which began the project in July 2015, has had a number of accomplishments during the first year of the project. For example, Plan Chef was recently nominated for a TAL Award (Latin America's public television awards) for interactive content for a television show. This nomination is a recognition of the success of the *SaborUSA* campaign that links our food show with our interactive website, smartphone application and social media. This report reviews the performance of the *SaborUSA* campaign during the first seven months in 2016.

General Information:

SaborUSA is a non-traditional marketing campaign in Colombia, funded by FAS's Global Broad-Based Initiative (GBI). There are 19 cooperators participating in the GBI, with the lead cooperator being the California Pear Advisory Board. Cooperators in the project represent a wide range of agricultural products including pears, meat, peanuts, wine, liquors, apples, poultry and eggs, popcorn, grains, table grapes, dry beans, soybeans, rice, pulses, sunflowers, other consumer oriented products, and most recently, Alaskan seafood.

The overall objective of the *SaborUSA* campaign is to increase U.S. consumer-oriented exports to Colombia by building a growing community of Colombian consumers who are interested in U.S. food culture. The campaign takes advantage of the U.S.-Colombian Trade Promotion Agreement (CTPA), a growing economy, and Colombia's fascination with all things American. The Colombian Canal 13 TV station is the implementing partner for *SaborUSA*. Launched in 1998, Canal 13 is a regional television channel that focuses on younger audiences. We are also partnering with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy. Although *SaborUSA* is initially focused on Colombia, we would like to eventually expand the campaign to other Spanish speaking countries.

The Campaign Has Four Key Components

The campaign has four key components that supercharge cooperator activities by increasing the reach of the audience for these activities and promoting the *SaborUSA* brand to Colombian consumers.

1. Television Cooking Show

The flagship of our campaign is the TV cooking show. In 2015 *SaborUSA* partnered with Canal 13's Plan Chef cooking show, which had been on the air since 2011. Plan Chef helped to familiarize the Colombian audience with the *SaborUSA* campaign and cooperator products.

In 2016 we created our own cooking show, *I ❤️ SaborUSA*. Canal 13 will no longer air Plan Chef.

The new host is Karina Palmer, an engaging bilingual restaurateur and food blogger. Plan Chef's creative team will also be the creative team for the new show. The show features celebrity chefs who prepare dishes using U.S. cooperator products. Each episode has a different theme that appeals to Colombians such as holidays, exercise, healthy eating, and U.S. regional cuisine. The show airs on Canal 13 at 7 pm (Colombian time) on Saturday evening. We also live-stream the show on the *SaborUSA.co* website and place previous episodes on our website.

Plan Chef

- We filmed 25 episodes of Plan Chef in 2015. The total audience for the show (both live and repeat episodes) was 323,000 viewers. The first show, the 4th of July episode, was extremely popular and featured Ambassador Kevin Whitaker as the first "guest chef" (below left is a picture of Ambassador Whitaker with the show's host Alejandro Canedo). On November 14, the "California Dreaming" episode with FAS Administrator Karsting (pictured on the right with

Chef Canedo) aired on Canal 13.



- For the success of the show, Plan Chef was recently nominated for a TAL Award (Latin America's public television show awards) for interactive content for a television show. This nomination is a recognition of the success of our non-traditional marketing campaign that links our TV food show with our interactive website, smartphone application and social media.

I ❤️ SaborUSA

- Our new show, *I ❤️ SaborUSA*, will have a guest chef for each episode, where we challenge our guests to prepare a meal using cooperator products.
- We showcase a market to table approach, sharing the experience from purchasing ingredients to preparing a meal.
- *I ❤️ SaborUSA* began airing in mid-June on Canal 13 at 7 pm (Colombian time) on Saturday evening.
- We will be taking *I ❤️ SaborUSA* on the road, filming several episodes of the show in the United States and in different cities in Colombia. In fact, we recently filmed two episodes in Cartagena during the *Sabores Cartagena* gastronomic festival, featuring the celebrity American chefs Gia Passalacqua and Rock Harper (below left is a picture of host Karina Palmer with Chef Gia and on the right is our host with Chef Rock Harper).



- In late June, we filmed an episode with USDA Deputy Under Secretary (DUS) Jonathan Cordone (DUS Cordone is pictured with host Karina Palmer below). The theme of the show was the popularity of barbecuing in the United States and featured U.S. porterhouse and T-bone steaks. The show should be part of the upcoming U.S. Meat Export Federation's promotional campaign in Colombia.



The cooking show and promotional campaign successfully links market development with trade policy success. After several years of hard work on the part of the U.S. government, Colombia reopened its market for U.S. bone-in-beef cuts in January 2016 after it had been closed for several years because of BSE fears.

- The *SaborUSA* team continues to partner with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy to expand the campaign's audience. The U.S. Embassy's website and social media are extremely popular in Colombia. We are also increasing our engagement with the State Department's Culinary Diplomacy Program to showcase U.S. celebrity chefs on the show.

2. Interactive Web Site (*SaborUSA.co*)

The homepage of the website has a brief explanation on *SaborUSA* and we live stream *I ❤️ SaborUSA* episodes on the site on Saturday evenings. The website also has a navigation menu with six tabs:

- Meet Us: A video on *SaborUSA* and information on participating cooperators
- Enjoy: Information on products represented by cooperators
- Get Inspired: Recipes by category such as children, special celebrations, etc.
- Find Out About Us: Blog, news feed, Plan Chef episodes
- Participate: Upcoming events and product promotions
- Share: Contact us, recipes sent by the *SaborUSA* community

The website went public on July 11, 2015. At the end of July 2015, the website had 839 unique hits. As of June 2016, the web site has had 19,944 unique hits, an increase of 2,277% since the campaign

started.



3. SaborUSA Smartphone Application

The *SaborUSA* smartphone app features recipes with cooperator products and is utilized by consumers to discover cooperator products. It is easy and free to download for both androids and I-phones. We started the app on July 7, 2015. At the end of July we had 66 downloads. At the end of June 2016, we had 575 downloads, an increase of 771 % in twelve months.



4. Social Media

We are using Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, and Instagram to promote *SaborUSA* and cooperator activities.

- The *SaborUSA* Facebook site went public in early July. As of June 2016, Facebook had 7,489 followers, an increase of 4,384% since the campaign started.
- As June 2016, Twitter had 389 followers, an increase of 1,668% since the campaign started.
- As June 2016, Instagram had 758 followers, an increase of 1,084% since the campaign started.
- We also have a *SaborUSA* YouTube channel.



Marketing Activities

We are using *SaborUSA* to supercharge cooperator activities and promote the *SaborUSA* brand to Colombian consumers. In 2015 we promoted 21 marketing activities for U.S. food products, which reached thousands of Colombian consumers.

During the first seven months of 2016 we have promoted twelve marketing activities for U.S. food products. These activities included: Washington apple promotions; a California wine tasting event; a Cochran gastronomy education and promotion program to the United States for 15 Colombian chefs; the launching of the *I ❤️ SaborUSA* TV show for Colombian media; a *SaborUSA* booth at Alimentec trade show, the largest food show in Colombia; U.S. cooperator product participation at the Embassy's 4th of July celebration at the Ambassador's Residence; and the *SaborUSA* booth at the Sabores Cartagena gastronomic festival. We also filmed *I ❤️ SaborUSA* episodes that complemented already planned U.S. rice and poultry promotional activities.